



MONTEREY NEWS

September 1998
VOLUME XXVIII • Number 9



TOWN NEWS

At a Special Town meeting July 31, voters approved via secret ballot an appropriation of \$217,000 for renovations to the Town Offices. David Bixby of Clark & Green architectural firm presented the project as an answer to both the overcrowding problem and the lack of handicapped access to the Town Offices, and described the renovation as "modest and appropriate to the scale of the town."

The project, which is contingent upon receiving \$150,000 in grant awards, would create a new entrance to the Town Offices, and calls for an addition on the same level as the existing building. The addition/renovation will include the following: a new office for the town secretary; meeting rooms for town boards; a refurbished assessors office; space for the town clerk; a finance office; storage space for supplies; a bathroom that conforms to the specifications of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and an elevator to make the basement accessible to handicapped individuals.

Former finance committee member Jack Ryder pointed out that, although the Town has applied for several grants, there is no guarantee that these grants will be awarded. Select Board chair Fred Chapman responded that if no grant monies are received then the project will not go forward. Dean Amidon reminded voters that the town has been haggling over a new



The unofficial Monterey General Store coffee club enjoyed a sunny Sunday. From left to right, back row: George Emmons (standing), Betsey Camp, Dick Tryon, Henry Wolfer, Leroy Thorpe. Front row: Paul Wolfer, Steve Kahn, Art Funk, and Ed "Cliff" Briggs.

town hall for "about one hundred years." He recommended that the warrant article be amended to make the appropriation "contingent upon the receipt of a minimum of \$150,000 in grant money." The amendment was unanimously approved.

Kenneth (Bob) Heath made a dramatic motion to table the Town Offices renovation article until a thorough review of the Wilson/McLaughlin property was made. The motion failed fifteen to fifty six. Attorney Charles Ferris was also concerned about the Wilson/McLaughlin property, and asked if the appropriation was approved if that would then mean the loss of the bequest? Select Board member Peter Brown responded that the approval of the article in no way means the loss of the Wilson/McLaughlin property.

Fiscal watch dog Dick Tryon ques-

tioned the bidding process versus the total cost of the project, "What if the bids come in for a lot more money than the estimates? I personally would like to know that if the estimates are in at \$385,000 that that is it. What will you do if it goes over \$385,000?" Architect David Bixby responded candidly that the project would either have to be cut back, or that the town would have to appropriate additional funds.

A voice vote was taken on the article which passed with a resounding "aye" and no dissenting voices. That would have been the end of it if town accountant Barbara Gauthier hadn't reminded the meeting that, according to the Town Bylaws, all articles involving borrowing funds must be voted on by secret ballot. Citizens dutifully remained, and the article was approved with fifty nine voting in favor and eleven opposed.

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In some basic housekeeping, article two on the warrant asked the town to approve the addition of the word "domicile" to a bylaw providing a tax abatement for volunteer firefighters that was passed two years ago. The intention of the bylaw is to recognize the contribution firefighters make to the town, and as a possible incentive to encourage additional volunteers to join the Monterey Fire Company. The article passed unanimously.

In other business, there was majority approval of article one on the warrant; a request to raise and appropriate \$1,158 for some unpaid bills for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

On August 10 the Select Board opened six bids for firefighter turnout gear, and passed them on to Monterey Fire Company business manager Maynard Forbes for recommendations. An appropriation of \$21,858 was approved at the annual Town Meeting in May for the purchase of such gear. After reviewing Forbes' recommendations the Select Board awarded the following bids: Fire Tech & Safety of New England; for twenty sets of turnout gear, twenty Velcro name patches, and twenty one helmets; from Fisher Scientific Company, twenty pairs of bunker boots; and from Ed Lyons Fire Equipment Inc., twenty four pairs of gloves.

Fifteen people attended the quarterly meeting of town boards and officers held on August 18, at 7:30, at the Town Offices, for the purposes of reviewing surveys used by various towns for polling their citizens on questions regarding land use and planning. Thomas E. Skoglund, senior land use planner for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, was present to describe the process of conducting a survey. Skoglund said that after a town decides the purpose of their survey, whether it be for a master plan or an

open space plan, this dictates how to design and conduct the survey, and how to compile the results.

The towns of Lee and Lenox received a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) to conduct a joint survey which was mailed to everyone in both towns. The survey included a self addressed stamped envelope that was believed to account for the thirty percent return rate, which is considered high. This is a special program designed by the EOCD to partner neighboring towns for the purposes of regional planning. Monterey has been trying to interest New Marlborough in such an arrangement for over six months, but at the August 24 meeting of the Select Board Fred Chapman reported that New Marlborough had declined. Undaunted by the lack of support from New Marlborough, Monterey will continue to work toward creating a town survey for planning purposes.

The Five-Town Task Force on Assessments met at Mount Everett Regional High School on Wednesday, August 19, to attempt to resolve the apportionment issues among the towns of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD). Although no agreement was reached, member towns concurred that the matter should not end up in court.

For years there has been the ongoing issue from the town of Sheffield, which believes they are unfairly burdened with the costs of the school district due to enrollment figures; fifty three percent of the students reside in Sheffield. Additionally, a few months ago Joe MacKenzie, a finance committee member from New Marlborough, discovered that New Marlborough had been over-assessed for their share of the school budget, and that mistakes had been made by both the Department of Education and the former administration of the SBRSD. At their annual town meeting New Marlborough voted to withhold a portion of their share of the school budget.

During the meeting New Marlborough distributed a letter stating that if the district would return to a "per pupil" assessment method for determining the apportionment of the school budget, they would pay the SBRSD the full amount assessed. "Per pupil" assessment would decrease New Marlborough's share of the budget by approximately \$100,000, Monterey's share by \$9,000, and Egremont's share by \$33,000. However assessments to Sheffield would increase by \$104,000, and Alford by \$38,000. This led to considerable discussion regarding the purposes of the Education Reform Act, and it's implementation locally.

The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.



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In 1993 Education Reform was enacted to remedy inequities within regional school districts to address some member town's ability (or inability) to pay their share of the school budget. Ed Reform was designed to take into consideration demographic differences between towns and provide a more level fiscal playing field. Prior to this a town's portion of the operating budget was assessed based the number of students from each town, or on a "per pupil" basis.

Sheffield expressed annoyance that their proposal, which they called "split-the-difference," had not received serious consideration. This proposal would increase Sheffield's assessment by \$94,000, but would not revert to the per pupil assessment method. Select Board chair Fred Chapman stated that since the proposal was not based on either Education Reform nor the per pupil method of assessment, it was not really legal and therefore did not deserve serious consideration.

Courtney Turner, a New Marlborough select board member, agreed to return to his town with a proposal to release claims on past over payments, possibly waiving amounts owed to the town by the district. Monterey and Egremont, which may also be affected by the assessment inequities, concurred that they did not want to see any money back, but were more concerned with working out the current assessment problems.

School Board member Lucy Prashker of Alford pleaded with Turner to release \$70,000 of the \$100,000 assessment that New Marlborough has held back. Prashker stated that without this money it would be very difficult to begin budget negotiations. Unfortunately nothing was resolved and the five towns will continue to thrash through another round of negotiations, the dates for which have not been set.

— Maggie Leonard



COMMUNITY SUPPER

The next community supper will be held on Thursday, September 17, at 6:30 p.m., in the basement of the Monterey Meeting House. Bring a dish to share and enjoy potluck and the company of your neighbors. MaryKate Jordan is calling on Monterey poets to read from their poetry, with Alice Howell and David McAllester starting things off. Everyone is welcome.

— David Bach

NOTICE

The Monterey Select Board will conduct a public hearing on Monday, September 14, at 8 p.m. at the Town Offices, on the petition of Massachusetts Electric Co. and Bell Atlantic to install five (5) poles on Hupi Road, starting at a point approximately 1,840 feet southeast of the center line of Elephant Rock Road and continuing in a southeasterly direction for approximately 700 feet.

— Monterey Select Board

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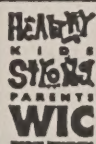
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STATE FOREST CENTENNIAL

The Massachusetts State Forests and Parks is celebrating its centennial. It all began on June 20, 1898, with the legislature's approval to establish Mount Greylock State Reservation, the first reservation and the first land acquired for the purpose of forest preservation.

There are programs planned at several different sites in the Berkshires. Here in Monterey there will be events at Beartown State Forest on Sunday, September 27, beginning at 11 a.m. with a hike around Benedict Pond with nature author Lauren Stevens. Also scheduled is an appearance by Smokey Bear, and a centennial celebration. Come join and celebrate the natural connection to a wild and wonderful aspect of our community.

FREE HEALTH

SCREENINGS

Back Clinic. On Tuesday, September 15 at 8:30 a.m. a clinic featuring the health and care of the back will be given by Dr. Adam Kerzner, a chiropractor from Housatonic. Workers of all age groups are encouraged to attend. Coffee and muffins will be served.

Cholesterol and blood pressure screenings will also be administered on Tuesday, September 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

These free health screenings, held in the basement of the Town Hall, are offered to all ages. The program is conducted in conjunction with Fairview Hospital, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association and the Monterey Council on Aging.

— Pauline Nault

MEETING HOUSE

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Monterey Meeting House campaign is looking toward an end-of-summer wrap up, and will then move into the construction phase. The project has gone out to bid and contracts should be signed shortly. Work on the building will start this fall to repair and rebuild the foundation, install handicapped access, and restore the belfry.

Joyce and Lew Scheffey recently announced a challenge grant in support of the campaign. They will donate \$500 (up to \$5,000) for every \$1000 raised. Another way of saying it is: \$10,000 in donations will be matched by \$5,000 from the Scheffey's. Confused? Send a contribution and Joyce and Lew will, too.

So far, the campaign has raised \$240,000 in cash, pledges and matching funds, and seeks \$40,000 to come in on target. The beautiful quilt raffle continues to sell tickets briskly, and the new owner of the quilt will be announced on Labor Day weekend.

If you've hesitated about making your initial donation—now's the time. If you've already given, please consider digging into your checkbook once more. We are very close to making the restoration of this community resource a reality, so it can go on serving the Food Co-op, the political meetings, the community suppers, the Congregational church, the concert goers and whoever else wants to use the facility. It is a place that is open to all—always has been—and all will be grateful to you for your help.

— Kathy Page Wasiuk

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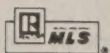
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HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

On Saturday, September 19, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District is sponsoring a household hazardous waste collection day for the towns of Alford, Becket, Egremont, **Monterey**, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Washington, West Stockbridge, and Great Barrington. The collection will be held at the Great Barrington Recycling Center located across from Monument Mountain High School on Route 7. Preregistration is required as there are scheduled time slots for each vehicle. Call Larry Lampman, district coordinator, to preregister. The deadline is September 17.

Latex paint, although it is not a hazardous substance, will be collected on the same site by volunteers from the Center for Ecological Technology for distribution to local nonprofit organizations. **The paint must be usable-not lumpy, dried, or previously frozen.**

Household hazardous waste. What to bring: any substance marked: caustic, toxic, corrosive, poison, flammable, warning, danger, caution.

From the yard and garden: pesticides, herbicides, insect sprays, rodent killers, pool chemicals, muriatic acid,

flea powder, "No-Pest" strip, fertilizers.

From the workbench: rust proofers, wood preservatives, wood strippers, stains, paint thinners, lead and oil-based paint, solvents, varnish, degreasers, sealants, fluorescent tubes

From the house: cleaners including; drain, oven, floor, toilet, rug/upholstery, furniture polish, pharmaceuticals, arts and crafts supplies, photo chemicals, chemistry kits, mothballs.

What not to bring: motor oil (we recycle it at our transfer station), flashlight batteries (they are disposable now), asbestos, medical wastes, fireworks and explosives, ammunition, construction debris, gas or propane containers.

— Joyce Scheffey

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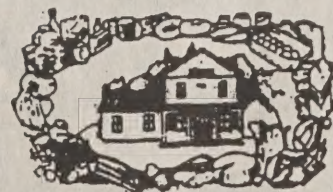
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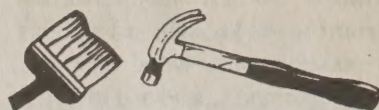
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THE EDITOR'S DESK

My inaugural year as Editor of the *Monterey News* has been an exciting one. When I began last August, I had never used a desktop publishing program, was not familiar with layouts, and had never edited a single manuscript. In other words, I was perfect for the job! Actually, the job was perfect for me; I have always had an interest in publishing, and have considerable experience in writing and photography. Since that somewhat inauspicious beginning, I have fallen madly in love with my Macintosh computer, and feel privileged each month to be able to report on the activities of the people who comprise our extraordinary community.

Of course there have been some snags, most of them technology related. Computers grow old and feeble, software becomes outdated, and printers die at (inevitably) crucial moments. While I enjoy using computers, I am not keen on making technology-based decisions such as which is the best new harddrive, or what the RAM (memory) upgrade should be in my computer.

If you think you hear the sound of distant hoofbeats, you guessed correctly. Enter Jon Sylbert, knight in shining megabytes. Jon is relatively new to Monterey, he and his wife Lisa Smyle (more on her in this month's Personals) moved here in April. Perhaps you have noticed their recent contributions to David McAllester's *Wildlife Survey*. Jon is experienced in desktop publishing, having done the *Berkshire's Guide* for two years, and he handles publications for the American Institute of Economic Research in Great Barrington.

This month we welcome Jon aboard the *Monterey News* as Assistant Editor. Last month his efforts were essential, but unseen, as he revamped and updated both the hardware and software with which the News is created. With that behind him, Jon continues to streamline the process of laying out the paper so that both of us may devote more time to the content of the News. We share the editorial philosophy that the paper is like a Buddhist paradox: It's perfect the way it is, with lots of room for improvement.

— Maggie Leonard, Editor



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THE BIDWELL HOUSE

Labor Day weekend has many meanings. For some of us it marks the end of the summer, for others it means the beginning of the school year. For farmers and gardeners it means abundant harvests of produce. On Sunday, September 6, at 1:00 p.m., the Bidwell House will celebrate this harvest season by hosting the second-annual Heirloom Tomato Tasting.

There has been a lot of talk about heirloom vegetables, especially tomatoes, but how do these antiques taste? Here is your chance to sample them and compare the many varieties. The Heirloom Tomato Tasting also offers a tour of the Bidwell House heirloom vegetable garden, where you can see several of these old varieties cultivated using the techniques of the period. The Heirloom Tomato Tasting is partially funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and admission is free.

The Bidwell House has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, for a series of programs based on the land-use history of the Bidwell property. The evolution of the property mirrors the farming history of western Massachusetts: the clearing of the land and establishment of farms by white settlers in the mid-eighteenth century; the great boom in farming after the Revolution in the late eighteenth century, which continued through the early nineteenth century; then the decline in farming and the rise in the charcoal industry in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century.

Program offerings for the series will include: a perspective on how the land was changed by both the Native American and white settlers, and what forces caused them to make these changes; programs on how the horticultural practices of local Native Americans, and eighteenth and nineteenth century farming communities evolved; and programs on local forest trades.

The format of the series will be lectures and demonstrations, with several programs offering a hands-on learning segment. One program will be offered in September, the others

will be held in the winter, spring, and summer of 1999.

The first program in the series, called Keeping the Harvest, will be held at the Bidwell House on Saturday, September 19, at 1:00 p.m. Admission is free. Keeping the Harvest is a presentation of historical and pre-historical food storage practices of different eras, highlighting the influence of Native American horticulture on the gardening techniques of the invading European culture. Native American methods of food preservation will be discussed and demonstrated by Lawrence Davis-Hollander of Eastern Native Seeds Conservancy. Demonstrations and learning activities will include corn braiding and hominy production. The focus will be on the rare varieties of the "three sisters," bean, corn, and squash, as grown in the Bidwell House heirloom vegetable garden.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth century portion of the program will be presented by master gardener Tom Weldon, and will focus on heirloom seed saving and historic techniques of threshing, drying, and making storage pits.

For more information on these programs please call 528-6888.

— Anita Carroll-Weldon

HANNAH CLIMENA PIXLEY A Life in Monterey, 1862-1953

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THE FAMILY NETWORK CHILDREN'S HEALTH, INC.

The Family Network is located at 940 South Main Street, Great Barrington: call 528-0721 for more information. All activities are at the Family Center, unless otherwise noted.

Family Network of Children's Health Program, Inc. has prepared it's September program. Regular activities such as drop-in times, mother-baby exercise, English as a second language, and fathers group, will continue as scheduled. The regular Parent-Child playgroup schedule will begin the week of September 14. A schedule will be included in the September newsletter. The Family Centers will be closed September 7 for the Labor Day holiday.

Parent to Parent Volunteer Training will be held October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 from noon-2 p.m. at the Great Barrington Family Center. Once trained, volunteers are matched with area families in which there is a pregnancy or a child three years or under. Volunteers are trained to give information about area services, emotional support, child development, and can provide transportation for important appointments. Some volunteers assist staff at the Family Center. For more information and an application, please call the Great Barrington Family Center.

A parenting series led by educator Maggie Sadoway, has been planned for October during the day with childcare provided. Anyone interested in this series is asked to call the Great Barrington Family Center.

Some staff changes have occurred at the Family Center. Tony Luttenburger, who has led the Fathers Group for three years and Loren Kinnaman, who has led the Play and Learn Playgroup, have submitted their resignations effective August 31. We are currently advertising for these positions. We appreciate the time and effort both Tony and Loren have given to programs at the Family Network and wish them well in their future pursuits.

We have had several additions to our lending library: two sets of Louise Bates Ames and Frances L. ILG developmental books for one-two-three-four-five-six year olds. This series is a good review of child development at each stage. One set is at the Family Center for parents to borrow. New videos include: *Gentle Touch*, *Infant Massage*, *First Aid*, *How To Save Your Child or Baby* in English and Spanish; and *Taking Care of Mom*. Also available: the book and audio tape *Infant Massage*.

A reminder about playgroups.

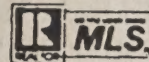
A parent or caregiver must remain with the child in playgroup. A leader is designated to coordinate the activities but parents must be responsible for their own children. Children should be in good health when attending playgroup. For more information, please call the Family Center in Great Barrington.

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Here is our calendar.

Drop-in times at the Great Barrington site: Mondays noon-2 p.m., and 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Tuesdays and Fridays 3-5 p.m.; Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m.-12 noon.

Drop-in times at the Otis site, Town Hall, second floor: Thursdays 10 a.m.-12 noon.

Every Monday, Play and Learn Group for three and four year olds, registration required. 10 a.m.-noon. Play and Learn Group will not meet August 31 and September 7.

Every Monday, 5:30 p.m. Father-Child playgroup.

Every Tuesday, Mother-Baby Exercise class, 8:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required and childcare will be provided.

Every Tuesday, English as a second language, (ESL) 9:30 a.m. Childcare provided. Please call to register.

Every Wednesday, Parent-Child playgroup will be held at the Family Center in Great Barrington 10 a.m.-noon.

Every Thursday, Parent-Child playgroup will be held at the Family Center in Great Barrington 10 a.m.-noon. Some special events will also be planned on Thursdays.

September 1, Licensed Day Care Providers meeting 7 p.m., health information by Jodi Tuller, PNP, Center for Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care.

September 9, Playgroup leaders meeting 6 p.m., light supper.

September 16, Advisory Board meeting 12:30 p.m., light lunch.

September 17, Special program-Garbage Art by Andy Matlow and Laurel Tewes. Playgroup will also be held at 10 a.m.

September 17, Parent-Infant drop-In, baby massage led by Vicki Guy, physical therapist, 1 p.m.

September 24, Field trip to Strassler cow farm, Route 23, Great Barrington, 10:30 a.m.

September 25, Field trip to Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Lenox, 10 a.m.

September 30, First aid led by Marsha Harvey, R.N., 6-9 p.m.



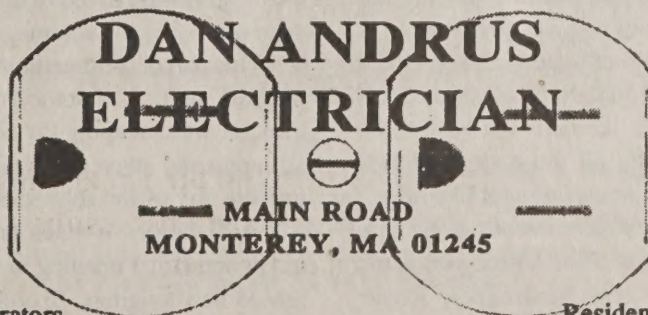
An empty row boat on the Monterey side of Lake Buel, and the waters beyond disturbed only by a breeze, signifies summer's end.

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Sunflowers on Sandisfield Road.

A CIRCLE OF STONES: Garden As Metaphor

I began living here in Monterey just two years ago. Like Dorothy, I showed up one day at the end of a whirlwind. It seemed like a miracle to be suddenly living in the country, a new home owner. At first, I was terrified and more than a little disoriented, yet I can recall with clarity that slushy gray day in early April when everything seemed to be melting, and I entered this little wooden house for the very first time.

In spring that year I began to yearn for open space and more sky around me. During the summer my zinnias drooped from lack of afternoon sun light. "These woods around here are so darn thick and tangled, and look at that clutter of stones—that rock pile over there—who on God's green earth would dump all those boulders out front like that? I'll have to do something with all those stones someday!" I'd talk to myself a lot like this.

"Just clear those woods over there and open it up! That'd give you some more light," my landscaper, Roger Tryon, remarked offhandedly.

Throughout those next winter

months, I could not stop dreaming my dream...a meadow weaving...a wildflower garden...my very own field of dreams.

And with this vision came doubts. "Hey, you've never been taught you can move mountains! Grad school, yeah, that's mostly intellectual! But meadows? Why, you're such a wimp you have trouble digging a hole in your own back yard." "Yes, you're probably right," I'd mumble to hush the inner voice that reminds me I have limitations. Then, like clockwork, my eye would go toward that pile of troublesome stones at the end of the driveway, and I'd whisper to myself, "I must do something about those stones someday..."

My initial revelation occurred when I made contact with the first of what would eventually become a number of helpers. Walking the boundaries of my land with logging contractor Jed Lipsky, I tried to explain to him what I held in my mind's eye. Instead of thinking it impossible, he began to see it too! I could feel him catching the vision and in an instant we made the decision together.

Within a day or two the discernment process started. I watched and learned as Jed carefully formulated what should be taken away, cleared, recycled and what could then emerge, become, and remain. He was gifted in his capacity to see the trees from the forest. The sentinel trees were marked, and everything else turned into bon fires that burned brilliantly like fireworks against a frozen, dark March sky. Transformation and celebration were continuous nightly events at my house. For days they flared and I loved rushing home to gaze out at the miraculous.

One part of the dream flowed neatly into the next, as if some great unseen director were shaping the acts, and positioning the players, without my attending any of the rehearsals.

As I began to enter and exit this larger and larger opening in the woods I sensed new longings. Exquisite, beautiful stone outcroppings appeared, as if asking to become sacred sign posts along

a pilgrims pathway. Each was individually marked with character and purpose.

Now should you and I ever strike up a conversation about say, *individuation*, or ballet, the arts, or even meditation, I'll understand because I am familiar with the concepts; I know the language. But *excavation*? That is definitely out of my realm. Yet with a back-breaking type of artistry excavator Leigh Tryon completed this amazing sleight of hand. How do so many stumps disappear so quickly? Where does one learn this sort of magic?

As I wandered about, tea cup in hand, learning what this sacred space was about, I soon began to know where "center" was. A kind of body-based wisdom let me know when I was on (or near) the stillpoint. What is stillpoint? I think its a place where everything—all forces—appear to meet and hang suspended, silently.

From stillpoint my eye would inevitably wander back downhill to that same troubling heap of discarded stones lying there. They seemed almost like an artist's paint tubes thrown angrily into the corner when inspiration has vanished. Then, slowly, I began to know. These stones are waiting to be a circle!

On a designated morning in early May, I finally came face to face with my ultimate terror: man-in-machine. (Better known as a backhoe.) Steve Funk greeted me, "Hi, I'm here to help you set your stones." With compass in hand, green garden stick with yellow bandanna marking center, we began the master task. It's not everyday I have a backhoe in my yard; I knew I needed to get this right the first time.

"See that smallish white rock over there...the one with pink and yellow lacings? That's east, she goes here." (I point and Steve delivers.) "Okay, good...now hum...that angled bronzy one over there? He's definitely west." (Again I point.) On and on we go, co-creating this circle of stones, this medicine wheel. Finally, the eighteen-foot circle of stones is complete. Twelve elders planted: mystical, powerful, yet feminine. How is it that stone can suddenly seem so soft?

Finally, it becomes time to decorate this peaceful sanctuary. Tom Morse

combs back and forth across her surface and we plant all my future hopes and wishes. Pounds and pounds of flower seeds and grasses—visible then suddenly invisible again. Now it's time to wait.

I don't wait very well, do you? "Trust the seeds to know when the time is right" a wise old Quaker gardener confides. And so, I sit and think of rain and meadows...

Perhaps it's just my imagination, but I think I see wildflowers and grasses in the garden now? Can it be my dream has crossed the river into form?

Sometimes, with tea cup in hand, I choose to sit above the circle looking in. I feel a real comfort and a calming in her presence. She reminds me of what Black Elk said, that all of life is trying to be round. Other days, I'm drawn inside the circle, to one stone seat or another. Once contained, she holds my musings most securely and her quiet overtakes me. She is Earth and she is Spirit.

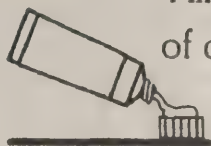
I recently read somewhere that all gardeners are ultimately visionaries, because we dream our gardens into being. It's just as likely, I would think, that gardens dream their dream of us. I do know that Stillpoint Garden is far from finished. She is, and forever will be, "in process." Like us, she will change through time. New life forms will enter, and perhaps stay awhile, while others die away to be recycled. Whom she is meant to serve, and how, I do not know yet. What I am learning is how to use the dark and winter's dreaming(s).

For now, I only know that special guardian spirits—some seen and some unseen—have guided and supported me along the way. I want to say a personal thank you to all those who were instrumental in helping me attain my vision. They showed me that, with help, it is possible to move mountains after all.

— Eileen Lawlor

Note: Eileen is a Quaker, a writer, and a creative arts psychotherapist in the Health and Healing department at Canyon Ranch. She is also a wildflower enthusiast and welcomes visitors to Stillpoint Garden by arrangement. Contact her at 528-7916.

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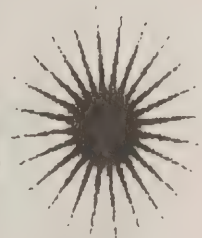
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Send your check for \$20 per book to: Sandisfield Arts & Restoration Committee, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Sandisfield Arts & Restoration Committee and the Sandisfield Historical Society. Books will be available last week in September. For more information, call (413) 258-4904.

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*Lo, His word shall come unto thee
in the beauty of holiness
in psalm, in prayer
in newness of life*

*O, Saul, rest away from Israel
let David sing thee peace*

*Lo, His word shall come unto thee
in the quiet of evening
in moon, in star
in firmament of sleep*

*O, Saul, rest away from Israel
let David sing thee peace*

*Remember, thou son of Kish,
the holy oil at thy anointing
the company of prophets
the tabret, pipe, and harp before thee!*

*Lo, His strength shall come unto thee
in the fresh of the morning
in light, in joy
with wings that will uplift thee*

*O, Saul, rest away from Israel
let David sing thee peace.*

— A.O.Howell

MILKWEED

*Walking by the woodshed
Much to my surprise,
Milkweed was in blossom
Before my very eyes.*

*The faded purple flowers
Were heralds for the King.
The black and orange Monarch
Would soon be on the wing.*

*August days are milkweed days—
Monarch butterflies are gay,
Until the winds of Autumn,
Sweep them both away.*

— Sheldon Fenn

WILDLIFE SURVEY

Along the roads and in the meadows the daisies have given way to a dazzling display of Queen Ann's lace, wild cucumber, purple loosestrife and chicory. The first of these, also called wild carrot and bird's nest, owes its proliferation to its deep, tough root and the attraction of its gleaming white umbel to every sort of pollinating insect. Wild cucumber, greenish white, is a vine that climbs to the tops of fences and thickets and raises its pointed clusters of flowers into the sun. The fruit, in late August and September, is a spiny, green bladder about two inches long. Chicory is a striking azure and is also called succory, blue sailors, and bunk. The root is much used as an additive to, or even a replacement for coffee.

A few touches of fall color have appeared, in mid-August: some birches show a scattering of bright yellow leaves, hobble-bush leaves are turning a dull greenish crimson, an occasional maple branch is turning red. Most of the hills are still "too much green," as Georgia O'Keefe said when she left the

Adirondacks for the stark colors of New Mexico.

The invisible young. The young animals and birds are growing fast as they get ready to cope with the world on their own. It is hard to tell the young ducks and geese from their parents and the young deer are no longer "fawns". But they are all keeping out of sight, an important part of their safety training.

Increase in the coyote and beaver population. Dale Duryea reports that coyote depredations among sheep and household pets in the eastern part of the state, and an annual doubling of the beaver census (estimated at 70,000, statewide, this year) has some legislators talking of a repeal of the anti-trapping law. He also suggests that we keep in mind the 280 collisions with moose reported in New Hampshire this year. It is usually at night that a motorist and a headlight-flustered moose come to grief, and we do have moose in Monterey. Dale saw tracks recently in Beartown Forest.

Concomitant decreases. With the number of predators up it is not surprising that rabbits and woodchucks are scarce. There are none of the latter in Dale's field this year (but there was a young one in Bonner McAllester's garden in early August). Dale says there is a significantly increased risk for cats that go hunting too far from home.

A New England ring-necked snake. This beautiful small snake is common in the Berkshires, but rarely seen. It is usually under the leaves in the woods, looking for insects and earthworms. One emerged in the courtyard of the McAllester household on Hupi Road, August 8. It was just the color of the dead leaves on the forest floor except for the paler ring of light brown around its neck. It was when we picked it up that we could admire the bright red underside. Sometimes the ring is red, as well.

The flowers. The black-eyed Susan's (yellow daisy, ox-eye daisy, golden Jerusalem, purple cone-flower) have been especially abundant for the last month and are just passing their peak now; golden rod of many kinds are beginning to flower; other flowers: Cardinal flower; Canada potato (earth apple, girasole, Jerusalem artichoke, wild sunflower); yellow hawk-

weed; sweet pepper; ladies' thumb; Tartarian honeysuckle; pokeweed; goundnut (flowers in small wisteria-like clusters, maroon-colored); wild thyme; turtle-head (snake-head, balmoney, shell-flower, codhead); sorrel; wood aster; boneset; jewelweed; blue curls; fox grass; helleborine; phragmites; fringed loosestrife; bedstraw; nettle; chickweed; tickweed; evening primrose; wild lettuce; goatsbeard; ragweed; shinleaf; bladder campion; purple loosestrife; water lily; meadow pink; wild mint; spearmint; New England aster.

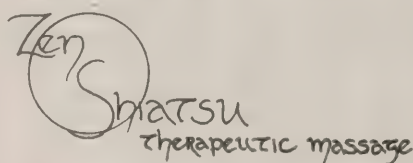
Berries. There has been much comment on what an unusual berry year this has been. Blueberries have been fruiting where they were hardly noticed before, both low and high bush, and can still be found in shady places. There has been a bumper crop of blackberries and they are still abundant.

A loon on the lake. The many different resonant calls of loons, echoing across a lonely lake, evoke nostalgia for the North Woods. New Hampshire has started a habitat preservation program to try and prevent the disappearance of this handsome bird. Loons appear on Lake Garfield now and then, though we have not had a nesting pair for many years. David and Bonner McAllester saw what appeared to be an immature loon, July 24 and Dale Duryea reports a similar sighting in early August.

Other birds. In the last week of July, Dale and everybody else on the Monterey beach saw an immature bald eagle circling overhead. On August 15 Eleanor Kimberley saw a female hummingbird in her gladioli. There are ruffed grouse in the Fargo Swamp at the east end of Lake Garfield. I have seen one, and then the other of a pair fly up several times; most recently on August 17.

Gnats and Dragonflies. There has been an efflorescence of gnats ("no-sees-ums") along with the lush growth of everything else, this summer. On July 24, at dusk, in a swampy place below our house, they were flying into my face like tiny, toothed raindrops. Suddenly I was aware of fifteen to twenty large dragonflies darting about, and a marked cessation of gnats.

— David P. McAllester



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WEJACK IN THE CABBAGE PATCH

Twenty-four years ago we cut the trees from our garden site, wrestled out the stumps with shovels and picks and a chain tied to the back of our car. We lived in a tipi at the time, and after a day of hauling brush and struggling with stumps we would straggle down the hill to sit in the tipi and study the gardening books. We didn't have much idea what to expect, but we did know from other people's gardening tales that we would not be the only ones enjoying our produce.

In the early years we kept up a tall fence to discourage deer. The first four feet were chicken wire and there was a top pole two feet above that. Before long we had to add a strand of electric fence wire at the top of the chicken wire, to keep the climbing raccoons out of the corn.

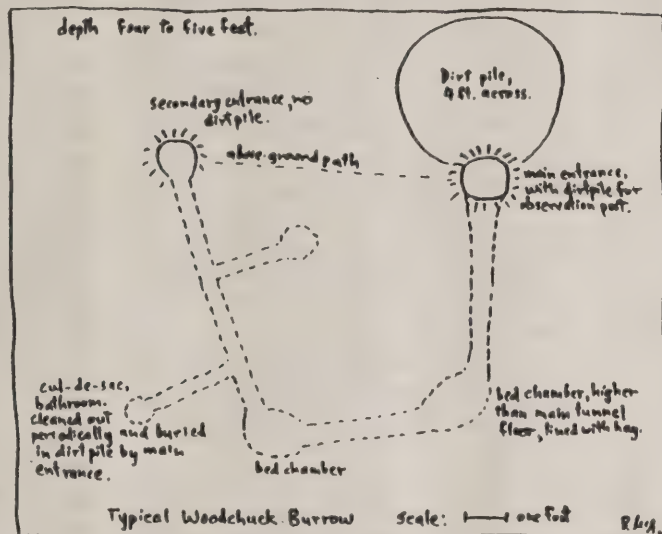
Since our garden was cleared out of deep woods, the animals that came were deep woods types. We never had a rabbit or a woodchuck, but there were plenty of raccoons, skunks, and deer. One year we had hordes of grey squirrels in the corn. I would go up there around mid-morning and squirrels would pop out in all directions; they could eat forty ears in one morning visit.

As time went on I felt more and more familiar with the many visitors to the garden, even though many of them came at night and were never seen by me. The skunks, for instance, left characteristic little diggings in the mulch, and sometimes they would have a run-in with the electric corn fence and leave aromatic evidence of their distress. Poor little feet and noses!

A month ago I finally got up to the cabbage patch to do some overdue weeding. Other chores had been more pressing until then and I could see from a distance that the cabbages were coming along well without my fussing over them. So one day I got a bit closer and discovered with a thrill that I had a serious burrower under a large cabbage. The hole was

small, about two by three inches, but the subsoil was mounded out in front of it showing that it was good and deep.

Most diggings around here are attributable either to me or to our young dog, Ruby. But I knew this was no hole of mine, and it was too focussed and tidy to have anything to do with Ruby and her wild ways. Although the soil was loose, I couldn't see any tracks clearly enough to



count the toes. I could make out small footprints about like those of our cat, who is no digger at all. So I guessed it might be a skunk at work, even though I know they are not serious makers of burrows.

I kept an eye on this hole, day after day, hoping for a good signature footprint. I could not detect any browsing in the garden, apart from a little work on the carrot tops, which we get from deer now and then, our mighty six-foot fence being long gone. One day I did notice two young cosmos plants nipped off about three inches from the ground. They were still oozing a bit, freshly cut, with no signs of the tops anywhere. This worried me but I clung to my skunk-hole theory because of its small size.

In fact, its small size was getting less small! Stones the size of plums, eggs, potatoes began to be thrown up out of it the mound of ochre subsoil was growing. I discovered pumpkin and squash vines shortened and oozing, like the cosmos. I realized that the carrot tops were going fast, yet no carrots were yanked out of the ground, which is what deer usually do.

At last, despite twenty-years' worth

of experience-based tunnel vision, the penny dropped. I realized I had a woodchuck in the garden, for the first time in history. For days I crept up there at all times of the day and night, hoping for a glimpse of my new phenomenon. All I ever saw was fewer and fewer carrot tops.

Finally I borrowed a splendid trap and considered the matter of bait. What could possibly attract a woodchuck more than my cabbage patch? I observed to myself that all its chosen morsels thus far had been green things, so I picked the best green things I had: northeaster pole beans. These I put in the far end of the box trap, beyond the trigger, and I set the trap right on the woodchuck's door mound.

I ran up the next morning before breakfast—nothing. Again around 9:00, nothing. My friend who farms in the Hudson Valley told me, "Woodchucks come out around lunchtime," so I didn't check again until nearly noon.

And there she was! A half-grown salt-and-pepper little fatty, sprawled out in the terrible heat on the floor of the trap. I hurried her into the shade and gave her a bowl of water which she immediately tipped over, but her desperate fast breathing settled as she cooled down. I noticed she had four toes on her front paws and five on the rear. On her upper parts she was hoary: black, grey and white, and her tail was very dark. I would have assumed a woodchuck was brown, but this was true only of her belly, which seems like an unusual arrangement to me. I am used to paler underparts in small mammals.

My woodchuck is gone now, to a place with daisies and black-eyed Susans, miles from the nearest pasture or garden. I filled in her hole but for a few days I checked it anyway, missing her, disappointed (almost) that the great excitement was over. Maybe in another twenty years I'll be visited by another bold pioneer from more open farm country. I expect I am nearly alone in this, but I am flattered that she came so far, and pleased that our stump clearing and cabbage patch could make her feel like settling down in the woods.

— Bonner McAllester

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SENATOR SAYS

Managed Care Reform. The Senate has passed a comprehensive managed care reform bill, which is designed to protect the clients of HMOs. People who are ill or injured do not need the added burdens of having to convince their HMO to provide for essential care, or to worry about how to pay for services. The Senate bill will help ensure that people receive necessary care. For instance, it establishes a "prudent layperson" standard for emergency room visits. If a prudent layperson with average medical knowledge thinks that a person needs medical care, the HMO must pay for the emergency room visit. The bill also mandates that HMOs give their customers the option of using the emergency telephone access number 911.

In cases where an HMO member is not satisfied with an HMO's decision, the legislation provides for an independent

external review panel. This new mechanism for appeals will be an objective arena where consumers can take their complaints once they have exhausted the HMO's formal internal complaint system. The bill also regulates internal appeals. It sets a timetable for appeals, allowing the HMO thirty days to reach a solution. The bill expedites the appeal process for hospitalized or terminally ill patients.

The bill also provides for the production of managed care "report cards". The report cards, to be distributed by the newly-created Office of Managed Care Oversight, will compare various HMOs in the state, possibly including information on member satisfaction. This is an important tool for consumers, who can use the cards to select the best health plan for their needs.

People throughout the district have talked to me about concerns with the health care system. Although the House and Senate have yet to work out a final version of this legislation, I am confident that the final bill will address many problems and will strengthen the consumer's position in the system. The improved access to information, requirements for service provision, and the appeal process set up by this bill, will help ensure that both health and care remain central to Massachusetts' health care system.

Firefighter Fitness Standards.

Many local fire departments have contacted me with concerns about recently-adopted physical fitness standards for firefighters. The 188 towns that accepted the 1988 Pension Reform Act provision are subject to the standards. As residents of towns such as Chester, Tolland and Blandford have pointed out, these new standards could affect the ability of small fire departments to recruit and retain volunteers, and thus reduce the ability of these departments to provide adequate protection. Particularly in small town departments, local fire chiefs are often best suited to judge whether their volunteers are capable of fighting fires. I will continue to push for a provision that would allow smaller towns to be exempt from impractical standards.

— Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo Jr.

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REP RAP

At the close of the legislative session on Friday, July 31, 1998, there were many successful bills that I sponsored and supported that will have a positive impact on our area. These victories will increase support to our towns, schools, and families.

I helped secure increases in many state funded programs and services. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) funds, which reimburse communities for state owned land within their jurisdiction, was increased by \$2 million for Fiscal Year 1999. Educational Initiatives included a \$5 million increase for regional school bus transportation and a \$253 million increase to fully fund the sixth year of the Education Reform Act. Per pupil allocations will now reach \$100. Local communities will see further state support through an 8.5% increase in local aid.

Another Berkshire County initiative I championed was \$50,000 for Berkshire Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program through the Berkshire County Juvenile Court. This program trains volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem for abused or neglected children.

In light of rapid changes in the medical services industry and the traumatic impact it can have on rural health care, I added language that mandates the creation of a commission to investigate the structure and operation of physician practice management groups and the impact these groups have on access to and the quality of health care.

I also worked diligently to make sure that the remaining funds I secured for needed repairs following the 1995 Memorial Day tornado were carried over into the next fiscal year so the Mahaiwe Cemetery restoration can be completed.

The surplus generated by our healthy economy helped fund a one-time \$200 million tax cut resulting in a \$50 per person return. This augments the tax cuts approved in July that will be phased in over the next year.

I was also successful in passing legislation that addresses a matter that I have been advocating for years: consumer protection. The Governor signed the Consumer and Merchant Protection Act in early August. This measure empowers customers by strengthening guidelines that require grocery stores to clearly price individual items on their shelves and to increase the accuracy of their scanners.

These increases in funding and security will benefit the residents of southern Berkshire County by direct impacts into their family budgets,

increases in municipal funds, and greater support to school budgets. This has been successful year on Beacon Hill for us, and I will continue to build upon that success in the upcoming session. We may be the furthest district from Boston, but as always, I made sure our voice was heard loud and clear.

If you wish to discuss any of these matters or should have any questions or concerns on another issue, please feel free to call my full-time district office at 413/243-0289.

— Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins



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PERSONAL NOTES

Happy Birthday on September 2 to **Dinah Mielke**, on September 3 to **Gabriele Haapanen**, on September 4 to **Micole Raab** and **Katie Vallianos**, on September 10 to **Talia Lynn Freundlich**, on September 11 to **Christopher Monk**, on September 12 to **Parker Gauthier** and **Mary Kate Jordan**, on September 13 to **Jeff Gauthier**, on September 23 to **Christina Vallianos**, on September 24 to **Ellen Coburn**, on September 26 to **Stephanie Grotz**, on September 27 to **Marcus Sheridan**, on September 28 to **Rodney Palmer** and **Ray Tryon**, and on September 29 to **Scott Sheridan** and **Susan Sheridan**.

Happy Anniversary on September 3 to **Laury and Jerry Epstein**, on September 7 to **Ann and John Higgins**, on September 11 to **Mark and Mary Makuc**, on September 12 to **Arthur and Alice Somers**, on September 17 to **Bob and Barbara Gauthier**, and **Maggie Leonard** and **John Humphrey**, and on September 27 to **Gerhild and Zachary Dickey**.

Congratulations to **Mark and Mary Makuc** on the birth of their son, **Justin Sheldon**, on August 11.

A new neighbor, **Lisa Smyle**, is a state-certified American Sign Language Interpreter, and has joined the staff of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission as a sign language interpreter. She will be working throughout Berkshire County with consumers of the Commis-

sion who are deaf.

It was great to talk to former Monterey resident **Sharon Steinberg**, who used to have a weaving studio and a pottery with her husband **Allan**, in what is now the Joyous Spring Pottery. They lived in Monterey from 1972-1980 and Sharon said that Monterey is always in her heart. Sharon continues to weave and welcomes contact from any of her former clients (119 Coleman Road, Manchester, CT 06040). In addition she has earned her masters degree in English Literature, and teaches writing at the University of Hartford. She reports that son **Casey** (now over six feet tall) has recently graduated from the University of Vermont with a B.S. in Natural Resources and Wilderness Education. Currently he is riding his bicycle across the U.S., before deciding what his next move will be. Great work and good luck Casey!

Finally, the scoop on those **Grotz gals!** Stefan reports that **Michelle** is now a second year medical student at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons, having survived the somewhat brutal first year very nicely. She was honored to be elected as co-chair of the student chapter of the AMWA-American Medical Women's Association-a national organization devoted to the place of women medical professionals in the medical community, and to promoting women's health issues. This past summer, Michelle earned certification as a yoga instructor through an intensive train-

ing program at Kripalu. She relies on the discipline of yoga for balance in her own busy life, and also hopes to incorporate it into her medical training and practice. Way to go Michelle!

Congratulations **Natasha Grotz**, who had completed her first year as a doctoral candidate in molecular and cellular biology at Dartmouth College, and has already been published! Natasha was first author on a research project identifying zinc transporter genes, and that work was published in the June 1998 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. She has achieved a very high class rank and was honored by her peers to be elected to the Graduate Committee, a position normally reserved for third and fourth-year graduate students. The Graduate Committee governs all issues affecting graduate admissions, curriculum, and policy. Natasha has had a busy summer, loving her position as a teaching assistant and having just returned from a week-long scientific conference at Cambridge, England. Go Tasha!

Mount Everett Regional School and Monument Mountain Regional High School both released their Honor Rolls this past month. At Mount Everett, high honors were earned in grade twelve by **Ellen Hamm**, by **Hannah Bracken** and **Katie Vallianos** in grade nine, and by **Claire Mielke** in grade seven, while honors were earned by **Cristina Temenos** in grade nine, and by **Cody Rosenthal** in seventh grade.

At Monument Mountain, high honors were earned in grade twelve by **Bethany Sadlowski**, and in grade nine by **Maggie Clawson** and **Mariah Ruth-erford-Olds**, and **James Hall** earned honors in grade nine. Congratulations all of you on your achievement.

We enjoy hearing your news, and passing on birthday and anniversary greetings. If you have any you would like to share, please drop me a line at P.O. Box 351, Monterey, MA 01245, or give me a call at 528-6691, if possible, before the 12th of each month. If you prefer to use e-mail, my address is higgins@vgernet.net. Thank you so much.

— Ann Higgins & Maggie Leonard

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CALENDAR

Sunday, September 6, Heirloom Tomato Tasting and Garden Tour - sample varieties of antique tomatoes and have a guided tour of the museum's heirloom Vegetable Garden, 1 p.m. Admission: free. The Bidwell House, Art School Road, Monterey, MA Call 528-6888 for info

Monday, September 7, Labor Day holiday, Town Hall closed, no Select Board meeting.

Saturday, September 12, 8 p.m., Sandisfield Arts Center, Thunder Bay Ensemble & Pleiades; visits with Emily Dickinson and Georgia O'Keefe. For tickets call 413-258-4848

Monday, September 14, 8 p.m., Public Hearing, Town Offices, on the petition of Massachusetts Electric Co. and Bell Atlantic to install five poles on Hupi Road.

Tuesday, September 15, 8:30 a.m., Town Offices basement, Back Clinic, featuring back wellness and care, by chiropractor Dr. Adam Kerzner. Coffee and muffins will be served.

Tuesday, September 15, 9-10:30 a.m., Town Offices basement, cholesterol and blood pressure screenings. These free health screenings are offered to all age groups.

Thursday, September 17, 6:30 p.m., Community Supper, Monterey Meeting House, Bring a dish to share and listen to Monterey poets read from their work.

Saturday, September 19, 1 p.m., Keeping the Harvest, lecture & demonstration of historical & pre-historical food storage practices including Native American methods. Admission: Free The Bidwell House, Art School Road, Monterey. MA Call 528-6888 for info.

Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Household Hazardous Waste Day, Great Barrington Recycling Center. Preregistration required by September 17, call Larry Lampman, 413-528-5922.

Monday, September 21, 10 a.m.-noon, South County La Leche league meets at the Guthrie Center, Great Barrington. Free advice and support for breast-feeding. For questions and directions call Maureen at 413-528-6619.

Saturday, September 26, Square and contradancing 8:30-11:30 p.m., at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, MA. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Joe Baker. All dances are taught and beginners and children are welcome. Refreshments served at intermission. Adults \$5, children \$2. Information 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m., State Forest Centennial Celebration, Beartown State Forest, Blue Hill Road. Hike around Benedict pond with author Lauren Stevens, and meet Smokey Bear.

THE OBSERVER

July 25-August 25

High temp. (8/24) 85.6°
 Low temp. (8/20) 43.0°
 Wind chilled low temp. (8/19) ... 41.0°
 Avg. high temp. 77.0°
 Avg. low temp. 55.6°
 Avg. temp. for month 66.3°
 High bar. press. (8/8) 30.39°
 Low bar. press. (8/24) 29.73°
 High wind gust (8/24) 26 m.p.h.
 Precipitation-rain .85 inches on 9 days.

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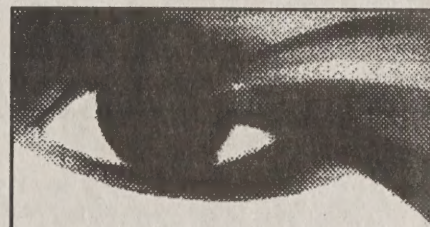
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mail (free!) to Barbara Tryon, Business Manager. We will typeset a text-only ad for your Monterey-based business, service, or event, or advertisers may submit an ad with graphics on a Macintosh formatted disk. Address your request for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us in Monterey at 413-528-1170.

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Contributions from local artists this month: Bonner McAllester, p. 15.

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